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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses human inequality and its consequences for the formulation of educational policy in South Africa. Various forms of human inequality, such as achievement, potential, lifestyle, life changes, credentials, aptitudes, and interests are discussed, as are psychological and sociopolitical solutions that have been proposed to remedy these imbalances. Ways that school systems can be designed to allow for and promote equal education, equal access, and equal opportunity are then considered. Next, the paper evaluates inequality in South African education by comparing educational access and input for whites and for the rest of the society. The author holds that educational decision making and policy formation are inextricably related to political power of South African populations, and that truly equal education will serve as a major vehicle toward national unity. (AOS)

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EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY AS A KEY CONCEPT IN THE CREATION OF A NEW EDUCATIONAL DISPENSATION FOR SOUTH AFRICA

A WORKING PAPER

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EQUALITY OF EDUCATION : A NEW DIRECTION IN SOUTH AFRICA?

At the height of the crisis in schools controlled by the Department of Coloured Relations the Prime Minister, Mr P W Botha, issued the following significant statement:

> "The government accepts that justifiable grievances and a backlog regarding the provision of education exist in the coloured community. I shall make it my personal task to ensure that these grievances and the eradication of the backlog be given priority treatment. The government pledges itself to the goal of equal education for all population groups, but emphasizes that the historical backlog cannot be overcome overnight. My government and I are prepared to accept a programme whereby the goal of equality of education for all population groups can be attained as soon as possible within South Africa's economic needs."[1]

This statement is clearly echoed in the brief given to the H.S.R.C. investigation into education, which posits "a programme for making available education of the same quality for all population groups," the purpose of this programme being to

> "i) allow for the realisation of the inhabitants' potential
>
> ii) promote economic growth in the R.S.A., and
>
> iii) improve the quality of life of all the inhabitants of the country."

At no stage in the history of South Africa has any government postulated a policy of 'equal education for all population groups' or 'equality of education for all population groups' or 'education of the same quality for all population groups,' and so one can argue forcibly that the abovementioned statement by the Prime Minister and the brief to the H.S.R.C. reflect a very considerable movement away from the traditional commitment to a 'separate and unequal' educational dispensation. The traditional policy was often quite explicit in seeing the education system in South Africa as designed to perpetuate inequality and discrimination. We quote Dr H F Verwoerd as an example:

> "When I have control of Native Education I will reform it so that Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them ..."[2]

Although the great majority of South Africa's people will obviously welcome a governmental commitment to 'equality' in education, there is as yet no indication of the meaning being given to that concept. Accordingly it is necessary to reflect upon the educational equality debate that has continued for well over twenty years in the Western world in order to gain some conceptual clarity on what is seen as constituting equality in education, and some insight into the implications of various approaches to achieving educational equality. One will then be better equipped to reflect upon alternative strategies for the attainment of educational equality in South Africa, and the implications of such strategies. Such a reflection is urgently required, for what precisely is meant by the concept of educational equality is by no means self-evident, the concept having experienced a variegated history.

HUMAN EQUALITY AS THE BASIS FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY?

The most basic understanding of 'equality of education' would seem to be a commitment to a policy of treating all people equally, and this would seem to depend upon the argument that all men are created equal in some or other meaningful sense. However, this is dismissed by Eysenck as "politically impossible, philosophically meaningless, and biologically absurd."[3] That all men are equal is a statement seemingly more of the order of moral imperatives and ethical commands than a meaningful basis for a reasonable educational dispensation, it is argued. The diversity of mankind is patently observable. Therefore, any statement of 'human equality' would seem to rest upon conceptions of an equality of <u>rights</u> to which all men may be said to be entitled, and such rights will depend upon a generally accepted anthropology, theology or ethic, such as that contained in the Declaration of Human Rights. So, while all may well agree that it is unacceptable for any man to have his toenails ripped off by a police officer - all men are

equally entitled to protection against physical violence, let us say - this does not carry with it the logical corollary that all people should be treated equally in every respect. In fact, it may be generally accepted that the only way to 'cure' a man who goes around ripping off other people's toe-nails is to subject him to the same treatment. The generality is more closely defined by the rule.

Mary Warnock illustrates this point effectively by citing the example of a group of hungry people and the availability of a cake. In such circumstances, she argues, "the rule will be that everyone shall have a piece of cake and ... everyone will have an equal right."[4] A movement away from this level of generality, however, requires the formulation of rules of allocation - such as, in the example cited, the degree of hungriness of the members of the group, or the likelihood of more food being available to some or all of them in the future. Each person, then, "should be treated as having a right, according to the rule ... each gets what the rule allows."[5] The rule, then, might be seen to be formulated in principle in terms of equality-in-the-light-of-justice.

There is also convincing evidence that no society on earth has functioned or does function on a basis other than of inequality. According to one's perspective, this might be seen as a simple reality of life, or as a means to the proper functioning of a healthy society, or perhaps as the inevitable and unfortunate feature of a racist or capitalist political dispensation. What is more, there is little doubt that even the most overtly Marxist or socialist states in the world also operate from an assumption of human inequality, an inequality clearly to be observed in both aspects of Marx's famous dictum, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Educational equality, then, cannot be considered the necessary consequence of a necessary postulate of human uniformity, if by educational equality is meant the same education for every person. 'Human equality' concerns rather an ethical concept of residual rights.

HUMAN INEQUALITY

It may, therefore, be of more use for our purposes to attempt to assess human inequality, and the reasons for it, in order to clear the way for an evaluation of the extent to which these inequalities might be considered proper or unacceptable, and for the subsequent and related formulation of an educational policy that not only seeks to take cognisance of such inequalities but also attempts to eliminate them or to alleviate their impact upon the individuals concerned - or even (in so far as they are deemed 'proper') to take advantage of them. This is, in fact, strongly suggested in the brief to the H.S.R.C., in that a future educational policy is called upon to "allow for the realization of the inhabitants' potential" and to "improve the quality of life of all the inhabitants of the country."

In the first place, we may refer to inequalities in achievement - varying levels of skill or competence or simply of 'success'. Secondly, and closely related, are inequalities in ability or 'potential', making equal achievement impossible or unlikely for all. Thirdly, there are inequalities in lifestyle - different qualities of housing, neighbourhood, environment, access to amenities, working conditions and the like. Fourthly, one may mention inequalities in life chances - the prospect of attaining maximal status, lifestyle, income or degree of satisfaction and happiness. Next, and seriously influencing both lifestyle and life chances, are inequalities in credentials, in the 'certificate currency' so significant in modern societies. Then one may also mention differences in aptitudes or interests, in personality and temperament, in physical endowment and so on, with the proviso that one needs to beware of confusing diversity with inequality - as is, of course, the case with some of the other variables mentioned.

Next, one must attempt to deal with the question of the reasons for the existence of these inequalities or variables. An assortment of explanations has been produced, from which we

shall focus for the purposes of our argument on only two categories - those that seek solutions within the field of psychological knowledge, and those seeking solutions from a sociopolitical frame of reference.

One famous psychological focus is the genetic approach, which attributes inequalities in aptitude, ability, achievement and the like to differences in the innate intelligence of individuals, as measured by I.Q. testing and other psychometric techniques. Jensen, for instance, uses the term 'heritability' to describe the genetic factors having a bearing on intelligence, arguing that such heritability is in fact substantial in its implications for human equality[6] - or, as Eysenck puts it, "Biology sets a limit."[7] Much of the adverse reaction to Jensen's findings stemmed from his assertion that genetic difference concerned not only individuals but groupings of people as well : social classes and racial groupings also varied in overall genetic endowment. In fact, Jensen saw the problem of Negro-White inequality in educability in the U.S.A. as essentially the problem of Negro-White differences in intelligence.[8]

More popular an explanation for the existence of these inequalities over the last few decades has been the appeal to environmental influences, whereby inequalities in aptitude, ability achievement, life chances and the like are attributed to the debilitating influence of home backgrounds and neighbourhood circumstances. In fact, supporters of the 'genetic' approach are quick and unanimous in pointing out that intelligence is not merely determined by innate potential but also by the influence of environmental factors. Thus Eysenck's point that "No geneticist doubts that heredity and environment interact to produce the observed I.Q. score"[9] is made to defend precisely the part played by heredity, the role of environment being taken as axiomatic.

Those attempting to explain inequality between people or groups such as social classes or racial groups from a sociopolitical or ideological stance see these inequalities as resulting from what Tyler terms "the overarching structures and the greater

institutions of society"[10] and Halsey the "structural inequalities of resource allocation which are integral to a class society."[11] Essentially this viewpoint focuses upon the discriminatory practices of a dominant social class, political elite or economic establishment. Others again may justify precisely those inequalities on the basis of a cultural ideology seeking to legitimize the right of the rulers to rule in terms of an ethnocentric definition of superiority and a gradualist deficit model of the ruled. Even here, however, inequality *per se* is not defended, but reasons for its perpetuation are provided.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION VIS-A-VIS INEQUALITY

Having listed certain inequalities, and having presented some of the arguments put forward to account for the existence of these inequalities, we may proceed to make as a statement of cardinal importance, that nobody admits to recognizing inequality as *in principle* acceptable. If, then, all are *in principle* committed to the achievement of equality (however it may be defined), it remains to investigate the extent to which educational systems and processes are seen as serving to underpin, reinforce or reduce these inequalities, either unconsciously or deliberately. And while some may well also feel that equality is *in practice* ultimately unattainable, all would probably accept the need to eliminate or reduce what might be termed 'gross' inequalities - and thus would see the need to reflect upon the role of education vis-a-vis those inequalities.

Michael Flude suggests that inequality defined as educational failure has been diagnosed in four relatively distinct ways. First, he refers to accounts "that focus specially upon 'deficits' imputed to the sociocultural environment of low status pupils, particularly those cognitive and linguistic inadequacies, value orientations and self-images that are seen to constitute major handicaps to educational achievement and hence social advancement."[12] The response to this definition of educational pathology has been the establishment of programmes of compensatory

education to "assist these pupils to compete more or less equally with their more privileged peers."[13]

Secondly Flude refers to those diagnoses that reject the 'deprived' model of pupils to focus rather "upon the inadequacies of current educational practices, particularly the reluctance of schools to recognize and utilize the diversity of pupils' cultural backgrounds and experiences."[14] Thirdly, there are approaches that focus specifically "upon the impact of various forms of discrimination associated with the unequal distribution of economic and political resources in the wider society, and the unequal distribution of resources within the education system itself,"[15] and, finally, those that "elucidate the processes by which certain kinds of educational deviance come to be signified and labelled in a distinctive way and the manner in which teachers as agents of this process interpret aspects of pupils' behaviour as evidence of 'cultural deprivation,' 'inadequate home background,' etc. ... (and) ... existing conventional definitions of acceptable educational knowledge ..."[16]

Bourdieu sums up the role of the school as agent of the wider society as follows:

> "By giving individuals aspirations strictly tailored to their position in the social hierarchy, and by operating a selection procedure which, although apparently formally equitable, endorses real inequalities, schools help both to perpetuate and legitimise inequalities. By awarding allegedly impartial qualifications ... for socially conditioned attitudes which it treats as unequal 'gifts', it transforms de facto inequalities into de jure ones and economic and social differences into distinctions of quality, and legitimates the transmission of the cultural heritage."[17]

If schools, then, 'perpetuate and legitimise inequalities,' it would follow logically that they have the power to do so. It would follow equally logically that schools of a different order might reasonably be expected to mitigate or even eradicate such inequalities - even a refusal by schools to 'perpetuate and legitimise' would be dysfunctional to the order fundamentally

responsible for such inequalities. In other words, clarion calls for 'equality of education' tend to rest upon two significant assumptions: first, that what education does is significant outside the world of formalised educational institutions itself - it is not merely an expensive baby-sitting service - and, as a corollary, that schools and schooling have the power to influence society, and its individual members, for good in terms of lessening inequalities however defined, thus to contribute to the creation of equality. This is what Coleman refers to as the postulate of the relative intensity[18] of the school vis-a-vis non-school influences upon the individual or group. Because this power of the school is generally taken to be axiomatic - Illich calls this the deification of education as a 'secular religion'[19] - we shall have to assess its validity later.

EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY : VARIOUS FORMULATIONS

For the moment, however, the question remains : how can the school system be designed to allow for and promote 'educational equality', 'equality of educational provision,' 'equality of educational opportunity,' or any such formulation. Three formulations will be looked at initially: equality in terms of access, equality in terms of input, and equality in terms of effects or outcomes.

Equality of access to education suggests that all persons should be allowed to enter educational institutions. This is normally expressed by the requirement that education be compulsory for a certain number of years and that, because it is compulsory, that it should also be free. This assumes that the existence of 'free schooling' prevents penalizing people because of their inability to pay for education. This reflects a rather primitive grasp of an economic concept, for it does not take into account the possibility that the child's labour might be crucial to the family's economic survival or well-being, or that the 'psychological costs' of attendance might not be adequately compensated for by the fact that education is free in a formal sense. Access also cannot be taken to refer merely to initial access, which is where the length of compulsion and the processes

of selection for non-compulsory education become crucially important.

Equality of access must then be seen to be a theory of equality based predominantly on a formal concept of equal opportunity to obtain some education: the role of the institution itself is seen as relatively passive and its educational offerings are treated as a 'neutral' factor, because the responsibility for achievement within the institution rests mainly with the student rather than the institution.

Similar in many ways is a focus on equality of input : that all educational institutions of a particular level or type of education should have basically equivalent facilities in terms of, for example, educational plant and equipment, teacher qualifications, teacher-pupil ratios, subjects and subject choices available and so on. The input model focuses on equality again in a very formal sense, and again places the onus of benefit solely upon the client. It may be challenged very strongly on a number of grounds: i) that it takes no serious account of the qualitative aspects of education in that it tends to posit a direct correlation between quantitive and qualitative factors; ii) that it takes no account of the variable 'inputs' to the school by each child, and thus of the possibility that certain children may well require greater 'inputs' than others, however those 'inputs' may be defined, and iii) that "equality defined according to inputs is inattentive to the effects of education which is the whole purpose of public schooling."[20]

A third definition of what constitutes educational equality necessarily followed, that the basis of assessment of school quality - and therefore of educational equality in the ethical sense of 'justice' - must be drawn from the effects or outcomes of schooling. As Tyler has phrased it, "the mere allocation of resources into new buildings and better teaching will not buy more long term equality. If these funds were directed into strategies that equalized use rather than provision, they would stand a far greater chance of redressing the present inequities in the cost and rewards of educational attainment."[21]

The 'outcomes' model is based, then, on the assumption that individuals' 'inputs' are unequal, and that the school must therefore compensate for these deficits, which were located largely in the environmental background of the pupils, and more specifically within the family situation. The result was a movement towards education as intervention, seen dramatically in the vast compensatory programmes of the 1960's in the U.S.A. "In this perspective," said Coleman, "complete equality of opportunity can be reached only if all the divergent out-of-school influences vanish."[22] Two beliefs tended to mesh in promoting this drive towards positive discrimination - a strong commitment to the egalitarian principle that people should not suffer discrimination for factors beyond their control, and an equally strong commitment in the 1960's to the 'human capital' argument, that educational expansion was a necessary condition for economic growth as a result of a more educated, skilled and adaptable workforce.

Turning first to the egalitarian principle, "equality of educational opportunity implies that no one should be prevented through social or economic impediment from getting the best possible schooling from which he can benefit. Irrelevant matters to do with social class, economic status, nationality, sex, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, race or geographical location should have no bearing upon access to schooling ... demonstrable differences in intelligence, achievement, talent, interests or tastes may justify differential educational provision. Everything hinges on this distinction between differences which are educationally significant and those which are educationally irrelevant."[23]

Rawls terms this the 'principle of redress':

> "... undeserved inequalities call for redress, and since inequalities of birth and natural endowment are undeserved, these inequalities are somehow to be compensated for. Thus the principle holds that in order to treat all persons equally, to provide genuine equality of opportunity, society must give more attention to those with fewer native assets and to those born into the less favourable social positions."[24]

This does not, however, resolve the question of the costs of compensation of the formulation of a policy guiding the extent to which one should go in seeking to eliminate inequalities in the face of concepts of the nature of 'educational ceilings' or 'diminishing returns' - something hinted at by one of Bowman's definitions of equity in the provision of education, viz. "Bringing each individual to the point at which his marginal ratio of added learning to inputs matches that for other individuals."[25] This latter definition may be said to be an attempt to operationalize the vague concept of educational equity in terms of "Ensuring that each individual receives the schooling that will enable him to realize his full potentialities"[26] - something Tyler dismisses as 'speech night rhetoric.'[27]

Concerning the 'manpower' argument, it was argued that money devoted to education should not be seen as 'expenditure' but as 'investment', and attempts were made to justify the calculation of percentage returns that had been achieved in terms of G.N.P. on earlier investments in education. Unfortunately, one might as easily stand the argument on its head by holding that greater economic prosperity provided countries with the opportunity to squander money on schools.

Was what was intended, however, equality of individual outcomes? As Entwistle has remarked, "the notion of equal results or benefits is very difficult to concretize educationally or socially. Equality of outcomes implies that in some sense people should become equal as a result of their schooling ... What would count as equal learning for the school population within a given society? Would everyone matriculate, or get a bachelor's degree or, perhaps, a doctorate - and with equal grades?"[28] Given that the securing of equality of outcomes between individuals is apparently an intractable proposition, even if it were desirable, an alternative that has been pursued is the possibility of equality of outcomes between groups. Green posits this approach as follows:

> "It can be set down as a kind of definition that any society will have attained a condition of equal educational opportunity when firstly the range of the distribution within that range is approximately the same for each relevant social group within the student population ... not ... that everyone must reach the same level of attainment. It means only that the range of achievement and the distribution within that range should be about the same for each social group."[29]

Entwistle proceeds to challenge this viewpoint, arguing that "From a humanist point of view it is not clear why vast inequalities between individuals within social groups should be more acceptable than similar inequalities between human beings across social groups."[30] Duncan draws the necessary conclusion, "that since both individual and group inequalities are unacceptable, we are really faced with decisions about the priority involved in removing two injustices,"[31] a decision based on political realism or expediency. But that group inequalities constitute the first priority should not divert one's attention totally from the problem of individual inequalities, nor should it be assumed that they are in principle separable.

A fourth approach to educational equality should now be mentioned because of its pervasive influence on educational thinking - the Meritocratic Concept. If we return to the principle cited earlier, that each person "should be treated as having a right, according to the rule ... each gets what the rule allows," then we have a postulate of equality as fairness. This may be expressed as the requirement that education should be made available on the basis of 'merit'. Now, merit may be seen in terms of a 'deficit' model of the clientele, in the same way that hospitals have been expected to deal first with the seriously ill irrespective of any commitment to preventative medicine. But 'merit' may equally well be seen in terms of unequal treatment of those who would seem most likely to benefit in another sense, namely that they display the greatest ability, potential, achievement, flair, commitment, motivation or what have you. This argument for 'equal chances to become unequal' ties in very well with manpower arguments requiring the maximal develop-

ment of individual talent.

> "If economic and social efficiency is the objective, then it appears that the most able must be identified early and educated to the hilt of their potential, quite irrespective of their social origins. If the efficient operation of the social system requires the maintenance of inequalities of wealth, status and power, these privileges should be rewards for qualities and skills which are relevant to social efficiency ... Hence, equality of opportunity, requiring removal of hindrances to the development of individual talent, has to be engineered through the educational system."[32]

Critical to such an approach is identification of talent irrespective of those 'irrelevant factors' such as social class, economic status, nationality, sex, ethnic origin, religious affiliation, race or geographical location, for, as Lyndon Johnson once said, "You do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and say, 'You're free to compete with the others,' and justly believe that you have been completely fair."

Also, there are those who would argue that it is precisely some of those aspects so glibly rejected as 'irrelevant' that are in fact of crucial importance, arguing that the 'superior' elements in society hold their positions of superiority not because of their acumen at discriminating against the rest of the population but simply because of their (superior) traditional values and breeding. A meritocratic system might then well be seen as resulting in the too rapid rise of the culturally inferior to positions of major influence. The point is well made by Entwistle, that "Critics of meritocracy often have in mind that rule by the merely clever is frightening (witness all the bright, clever young men involved in Watergate). Evidently, I.Q. and industry are not everything"[33] That this argument might prove attractive to the ruling elites in racially stratified societies is a point that needs no labouring.

Rawls defends the idea of meritocracy on the grounds that "there is no injustice in the greater benefits earned by a few provided that the situation of persons not so fortunate is thereby improved ... Injustice is simply inequalities that

are not to the benefit of all."[34] (To which others may reply that the only problem with the poor is their lack of money). Herein, then, lies the justice of a concept of inequality based on merit - that it serves, in fact, to be of benefit to all. What is crucial, then, is that the winners or losers should be determined "only in the context of a competition where a number of people are competing for the same goal in accordance with rules which can be assessed as being equal or unequal"[35] - in order that the meritocracy may be genuine and not bogus.

EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY : A CONCEPT IN CRISIS

The great drives towards compensatory education and towards education as investment met with limited and ambiguous success. The result was a serious challenge to the ability of the school to 'deliver the goods.' This was strikingly captured in the title of an article by Bernstein, 'Can schools compensate for society?'[36] - and his answer was an unambiguous No. Four responses resulted.

In the first place, there is Coleman's concept of relative intensity, that "the relative intensity of the convergent school influences and the divergent out-of-school influences determines the effectiveness of the educational system in providing equality of educational opportunity. In this perspective, complete equality of opportunity can be reached only if all the divergent out-of-school influences vanish ... given the existing divergent influences, equality of opportunity can only be approached and never fully realized."[37] Thus the attempt to produce a more equal and just society via strategies of educational social engineering is debunked to the level of "the Titanic of the social services,"[38] Jencks indulging in the ultimate iconoclasm of despair concerning the efficacy of educational endeavour by writing that "economic success seems to depend on varieties of luck and on-the-job competence that are only moderately related to family background, schooling, or scores on standardized tests."[39]

The second response was to substitute for a deficit model of the pupil a pathology of the school and/or teacher, much of it focusing on the school's function as the annihilator of alternative cultures in the interests of a taken-for-granted assumption of the 'middle class' culture of the school as the only appropriate culture, and the tendency of the school to label deviance in terms of its own 'recipe knowledge' or definitions of the situation. As a corollary there emerged romantic concepts of the 'culture of poverty' - "Make no mistake about it," said Bruner, "it is a rich culture, intensely personalized and full of immediate rather than remote concerns. The issue is certainly not cultural deprivation, to be handled, like avitaminosis with a massive dose of compensatory enrichment." [40] Flude states this deficit model of the school succinctly: "Under the guise ... of achieving a more equal society there is a real possibility of schools being employed to accomplish a form of social engineering that implicitly repudiates the rights of individuals to be themselves."[41]

Thirdly, there was the calling into question of the entire concept of educational equality - "not a meaningful term,"[42] wrote Coleman himself in 1975, but rather one that is mistaken and misleading:

> "It is mistaken because it locates the 'equality of opportunity' within the educational institutions, and thus focuses attention on education as an end in itself rather than as properly it is, a means to ends achieved in adulthood. It is misleading because it suggests that equal educational opportunity, defined in something other than a purely formal (input) way, is achievable, while it is not. A proper formulation would use the term 'reduction in inequality' ... rather than 'equality ...' Such a formulation would properly connote the fact that the initial state in which schools find children, and the continuing environments outside the school that compete for the child's time, are unequal, and that the school's task is - besides increasing opportunity for all, through what it imparts - to reduce the unequalizing impact on adult life of these differential environments."[43]

Tyler queries the concept of educational equality in terms of the naivety of its successive formulations, in that "the approaches

of sociologists, educators and politicians have been wildly unscientific. Instead of looking at inequality as a barely understood system, they have tried to explain everything by a single determinant ... inequality is multi-causal."[44] Entwistle also challenges the usefulness of equality as an educationally relevant concept, citing Peters' assertion that equality is a concept from economics, relevant only to the problem of distributing scarce resources among competing claimants.[45] However, "It is not clear that education does fall unambiguously into the category of things in relatively short supply ... If you have a mind to get at it, knowledge is publicly available ... If there is unequal learning in a classroom, the limiting factors are largely from the side of demand ... it appears that personal ability, interest or talent are the relevant factors."[46]

The fourth response is succinctly put by Entwistle, "Socialism or education?"[47] That is, it is essentially pointless to tinker with educational systems or processes while leaving unchanged the society within which education operates. Tyler put it as follows:

> If educational inequality is to be cured we must get beyond both individualism and rhetoric and look at those structures and processes of industrial societies which do not necessarily follow the logic of one's chosen world view. Only when this is done will it be possible to distinguish between those inequalities that are indispensable to productivity and liberty and those historic abuses which could well be swept away."[48]

Christopher Jencks posits three reasons why school reform will not make adults more equal - because cildren are far more influenced by what happens at home, on T.V. and on the streets than by what happens in schools, because reformers have little control over those aspects of school life that affect children, and because even where schools do exert a significant influence on children, the resulting changes are unlikely to persist into adulthood.[49] Schools should then, he argues, be made more pleasant and meaningful places for the simple humanitarian reason that so many people have to spend so much time in them -

therefore their amenity value should be improved. But real change will have to come about by social engineering strategies in the greater society - reducing wage disparities, progressive taxation of the rich, and income supplements for the poor.

What, then, is the position in South Africa, given the government's new commitment to "making available education of the same quality for all population groups"?

INEQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION

In contradistinction to earlier government perspectives, the Prime Minister now acknowledges that there are 'justifiable grievances' and 'a backlog regarding the provision of education'. About this there would then seem to be complete unanimity, and the quotation of statistics to bear out current disparities would be inappropriate for our purposes here.

When, however, the Prime Minister continues by positing goals concerning 'equal education for all population groups' or 'education of the same quality,' we must take careful note of the complex nature of the concept of educational equality (an analysis of which was the aim of the first part of this paper) and attempt to assess what meaning the Prime Minister attaches to these words. The findings of the overseas literature were essentially pessimistic and might be summed up by reference to an O.E.C.D. assessment of attempts to solve problems of educational deprivation in the U.S.A.:

> "... a purely educational response to the initial problem is unlikely to be successful. Educational under-achievement is seen to be merely one manifestation of a number of social and economic disparities experienced by disadvantaged groups."[50]

Two qualifications to this assessment of the situation need to be made at the outset, however. First, after the rejoinder that if schools, in fact, make no difference in a positive sense, they might as well be closed, Entwistle argues that in fact "... It is apparent that the average man does depend upon the cognitive assets which he acquired in school ... however little schools may have contributed towards his income or social status, he did obviously leave school with some cognitive assets ... He is literate and ... his capicity to communicate with all kinds of public and private institutions depend upon skills acquired in school. He is numerate and ... his mathematical perceptions were trained in school. And in ways which are less capable of assessment and measurement he has a personal culture - deriving at least in part from the history, literature, science and geography he studied at school ... most of us are capable of doing things relevant to vocational, domestic and political life, as well as in the pursuit of 'leisured' personal interests and cultural

experiences which we would be unable to do without exposure to forms of knowledge and skill from the school curriculum".[51]

The second point is that the nature of South African society and the enormous disparities that exist make it imperative that one does not immediately dismiss as irrelevant the concepts of equality of education that have been found wanting in an Anglo-American context. While it may not be sufficient to view educational equality in terms of access, or input, or output, it may well be that in a South African context it is imperative to use these concepts as criteria by which to evaluate reductions in inequality, while at the same time keeping clearly in mind that they in themselves do not offer an adequate assault on the problems of inequality. This also helps to guard against crises of expectation:

> "It is mainly in promising equal opportunity that education has failed to come up to expectation. The result has been disappointment and frustration for those within the educational system as well as for those outside the system who had high hopes of what might be achieved. Caught in this dilemma were educators who never promised the sure delivery of success, but were left accountable at the end."[52]

ACCESS AND INPUT MODELS OF EQUALITY, AND THE 'WHITE MODEL'

In this interpretation then, notions of equality in terms of access, input and output will be seen as appropriate starting points in formulating a new educational dispensation for South Africa. First, equality of access: this is not sufficient, but South Africa's people do not even have this threshold parity at the moment. It follows then that there should be an immediate commitment to compulsory education for a certain number of years - sufficient to provide genuine literacy and numeracy - and that the rules of compulsion should be the same for all people in the country. It follows further that such compulsory education at least, should be free, and that free education in non-compulsory sectors should be striven for as a matter of great urgency in order to mitigate to some extent the inability of the poor to proceed to, remain in, and benefit from educational institutions. Bursary schemes to aid the severely disadvantaged in both compulsory and non-compulsory sectors would also be essential.

Equality based on the notion of 'input' is also not sufficient, but it is indisputable that South Africa's educational institutions are manifestly unequal in terms of formal categories such as educational plant and equipment, teacher-pupil ratios, subjects and subject choices, teacher qualifications and the like. Again, therefore, we have to argue for educational equality on the basis of an input model. Both the 'access' and 'input' approaches were challenged earlier in this paper essentially because they placed the onus of achievement on the client and took no note of the qualitative aspects of schooling. While their use as criteria within the current South African educational dispensation has been defended here, it is necessary to inject a further warning concerning their use, namely the risk that 'equal education' on this basis may be interpreted as constituting the necessity to bring all educational provision, whether racially organised or not, up to the formal level of existing provision for 'white' educational institutions.

Such a step assumes that the current 'white model' is the appropriate one in terms of which South African education should be organised, and begs the question concerning the appropriateness and effectiveness of 'white' education. There can be little doubt that 'white' education is extremely well-endowed formally, and equally little doubt that an extrapolation of the 'white model' to all educational institutions will be an enormously costly affair, and therefore one likely to provide rationales for gradualism in the implementation of educational provision and change. The question has to be asked, then, whether <u>any</u>, let alone all, educational institutions should be of the current 'white' standard in terms of access and input. If one facet of the educational spectrum is to be regarded as the criterion for development in all other facets, it is essential that that paradigmatical facet be subjected to rigorous investigation. What is more, Corke argues forcibly that

> "Whether or not our fiscal system is able to bear such an expense is hardly relevant ... for South Africa does not have the manpower to enable the benefits of the white model to be extended to all sectors of the economy." [53]

The strong possibility that the 'white model' is an overendowed and luxurious one within the realities of the current South African situation must be faced squarely, so that the need for a reallocation of scarce resources can be investigated very seriously.

There are various possibilities available with regard to the rationalization of expenditure. One is to allow certain institutions presently well endowed in terms of facilities, equipment and manpower to persist as 'centres of excellence' open to all on the basis of competition for places and/or by a policy of positive discrimination. As these facilities are virtually exclusively to be found in 'white' areas, this is not an acceptable solution on its own, for it requires great sacrifice - for instance in travelling time - on the part of those it seeks to assist. Additional high-cost institutions would have to be provided in other geographical areas to mitigate this problem. A second possibility is to provide a basic facility at relatively moderate cost, leaving it to the local community to provide any additional buildings, equipment and staff it may deem necessary and which it can afford. This is also not wholly acceptable, as certain communities will find it far easier to provide such facilities than others, irrespective of their real commitment to education. A third possibility is to allow for the gradual attrition of some, most or all high-cost institutions by requiring them to admit far more students and by reducing their numbers of teachers and their resources. The question that inevitably emerges in any debate of this kind is that of 'standards,' to which we shall return below.

A second assumption that needs careful reflection concerns the tendency to equate education with a particular model of schooling. Strategies for a future educational dispensation for South Africa need to assess carefully the wide variety of alternatives that might be used to augment formal schooling, and in this regard there will have to be a definite commitment to great expansion in the provision of adult education opportunities both in the formal and non-formal senses. In this regard attempts should be made to evaluate the bourgeoning developments towards education and training within organised industry in order to safeguard their

educational bias in the face of temptations to concentrate upon training, however important that may be considered given pressing manpower bottlenecks within the national economy.

A few examples are called for. There is, for instance, the possibility of using radio and television extensively as a specifically educational medium, for example in the teaching of basic literacy skills and language fluency. There is the possibility of creating sub-tertiary correspondence institutions along the lines of the University of South Africa, or to establish half-study-half-work programmes, perhaps with educational institutions built at or near major industrial sites to allow easy movement from school to work floor. Equality of education does not necessarily require processing similar cohorts of different groups through similar schools.

OUTCOME AND MERITOCRATIC MODELS OF EQUALITY, AND THE 'WHITE MODEL'

Turning to conceptions of educational equality based on effects or outcomes, it is necessary to take note of the general failure of compensatory programmes in the U.S.A. and elsewhere. Despite the reservations expressed earlier in this paper about considering inequalities between individuals across certain groups more acceptable than similar inequalities between individuals within those groups, it seems a defensible strategy at this stage to select as a priority the mitigation first of inter-group inequalities rather than intra-group inequalities, though the two are obviously closely connected. We accept as reasonable policy, then, Green's definition of equal educational opportunity as meaning "that the range of achievement and the distribution within that range should be about the same for each social group,"[54] or any other group, for that matter. That this will require compensatory strategies and 'positive discrimination' seems certain, but one needs to guard against naive optimism in this regard. Useful in this regard is the idea that education should be seen "not as a means of redistributing the national cake, but as part of the cake itself."

In this connection it is again relevant to warn against the danger of utilizing a 'white model' as the criterion. One example would be to take as a norm for equality the current subject clusters

laid down as requirements for matriculation, along with the percentage of 'white' pupils who matriculate. There is considerable evidence to suggest that current strategies for producing vast numbers of matriculants have resulted in a bastardization of the whole school-leaving examination and a trivialization of the knowledge acquired. There would also seem to be a pressing need to diversify substantially the so-called 'academic' nature of secondary schooling in the direction of expanding technical-vocational educational facilities at that level of schooling. Adequate identification and selection procedures then become crucial if a bipartite or tripartite school system is not to foster the continuation of inter-group inequalities rather than their investigation.

Perhaps the most acute problem in devising a programme for equality of education with regard to school curriculum is that of language medium. If one opts for a policy of allowing the parent to choose a language medium for his child, most blacks would almost certainly select English. In the school system - integrated or segregated - these pupils would be seriously disadvantaged because of their general lack of fluency in English, which is not their first language. What is more, the language situation is aggravated for these pupils by the requirement that they learn three languages and that they study their other subjects through the medium of one of the two official languages. If one is to respect the wishes of parents, there would seem to be no other way of improving the quality of their education in this regard than by permitting them to drop the study of one of the official languages, thus allowing more time for the study of two languages - an arrangement that would greatly facilitate their learning of their other subjects through a medium other than the Mother Tongue. To be less discriminatory in regard to language, a future educational dispensation would have to insist upon Mother Tongue instruction plus the learning of one or two other languages, or else - and this would appear to be the logical course to follow - the learning of at least two languages, one of which must be an official language and one of which may be a 'recognised' African language - and this rule would have to apply to all pupils. While this would not solve the problem for those choosing as the medium of

instruction a language other than the Mother Tongue, it does meet the requirement stated by Prof van der Ross, that "the principle should be one of educational efficiency together with parental choice, and of these, parental choice should weigh the more heavily." [56]

It is also true that the selection of curriculum content takes place according to procedures favouring the influence and viewpoints of certain dominant groups of 'white' decision makers. This is particularly apparent in areas such as syllabi for history and religious education, which often formulate approaches to certain material that are unacceptable to many of those who have to study or teach these areas. There can be no claim concerning educational equality if dominant decision-making groups maintain the right to foist their own definitions of reality upon the majority. Accordingly an adequate process of curriculum decision-making on the basis of consensus is a prerequisite of educational equality, and there will have to be greater tolerance of controversial material in syllabi, and of alternative viewpoints upon such topics. Whether a curriculum shot through with the educational-philosophical assumptions of Western Europe and North America is the optimum arrangement for an African country is not something that can be assumed uncritically.

It is appropriate to return at this point to the question of 'standards'. 'Standards' are notoriously nebulous : it is very possible that the standards 'white' South Africans consider sacrosanct are only attainable by the few at the expense of the many. This is not to argue that 'standards' should be allowed to fall, but that the same standards cannot be attained by all. As long as access to high standards is seen as largely the preserve of a particular sector of the population, that long will the educational system be seen as illegitimate by the majority. A legitimate educational system - one based upon a criterion of justice - is one that does not discriminate and select on the basis of racial classification, and tries to compensate for negative socio-economic influences where they have had an adverse influence on attainment.

An adequate educational system will have to eliminate the tendency towards trivialization in the service of pseudo-standards, and will have to be far more flexible in catering for individual differences and learning problems - the need for schools to "recognize and utilize the diversity of pupils' cultural backgrounds and experiences."[57]

As far as the meritocratic concept of educational equality is concerned, the brief given to the HSRC investigation into education seems to follow the familiar pattern of welding together the idea of educational provision on the basis of merit (in the sense of identifying the most able and educating them to the hilt) and the idea of education as the means to providing the necessary skilled manpower. One notices this in the HSRC brief's seeking to devise a programme for making available education of the same quality in order to "i) allow for the realisation of the inhabitants' potential" and "ii) promote economic growth in the R.S.A."

Here again the relative intensity of school influences vis-a-vis societal influences must be considered carefully if one is to avoid perpetuating educational inequality on the basis of a 'deficit' model of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. This has particular implications for devising suitable means of identifying those with 'talent' in such a way that it does not simply mirror current achievement rates by virtue of culture-bound diagnostic devices. In this regard we are reminded anew of Tyler's statement that if educational equality is to be cured "we must get beyond both individualism and rhetoric, and look at those structures and processes of industrial societies which do not necessarily follow the logic of one's chosen world view."[58] It also raises seriously the issue of 'positive discrimination'.

EQUAL BUT SEPARATE?

With regard to structures, both the Prime Minister's statement and the brief to the HSRC seem to contain the assumption that there will be a continuation of a particular political dispensation based upon the existence of separate population groups which have to be educated separately. This was well illustrated in a speech by a government spokesman, Mr P J Clase, in the House

of Assembly debate of the Standing Committee on the Education and Training Appropriation Bill, that

> "'n mens vanuit 'n opvoedkundige vertrekpunt moet redeneer en nie uit 'n politieke vertrekpunt nie."[59]

Immediately afterwards, however, he argues as a principle for education

> "... dat die onderwys van elke bevolkingsgroep die volkseie-kultuur moet oordra en die volksidentiteit moet bewaar. Daarvan kan ons nie loskom nie ... Dit volg dus logies dat 'n mens nie 'n enkele onderwysstelstel kan kry vir al die verskillende bevolkingsgroepe nie ..."

The clear implication is that separate educational provision is required for each population group, the separate identity and existence of which is taken to be an a priori category and therefore one without any 'political' connotations.

It would follow then that definitions of educational equality in terms of access, input or output are likely to be understood in terms of the parity of equivalent institutions, to which admission will be determined inter alia but primarily by considerations of racial classification. It may be deduced, then, that the government has surrendered the principle of 'separate and unequal' education but intends to replace it by the principle of 'separate and equal' education. It is then reasonable to assume that it is the inequality that the Prime Minister accepts as a 'justifiable grievance,' but not the separateness. A further reasonable implication of this line of thinking would be that a removal of 'inequality' removes legitimate or 'justifiable' grivances, leaving the 'separateness' of education inviolate. Grievances concerning 'separateness' can then be defined as illegitimate in that they are 'political' and not 'educational', because by removing inequalities one has disposed of the problem of 'discrimination' in favour of 'differentiation'.

The notion of 'separate and equal' facilities was rejected by the American Supreme Court in the famous 1954 decision in the case of Brown v Board of Education of Topeka, the court ruling that involuntary segregation in public education was inherently unequal.

This echoed the report of the 1947 President's Committee on Civil Rights : "The separate but equal doctrine stands convicted ... It has failed to operate, for history shows that inequality of service has been the omnipresent consequence of separation."[60]

The key concept in the U.S. Supreme Court decision concerned segregation that was involuntary. It is not intended to enter here into a detailed analysis of the line of thinking concerning the existence of separate 'nations' or 'groups', except to say that adherence to a belief in 'national identity' obviously depends for its legitimacy upon the existence of large numbers of people who accept definitions of themselves as belonging to one group rather than to another. Accordingly, an essential prerequisite for a feasible dispensation - territorial, political, educational, etc. - based upon principles of separate group-ness is consensus:

i) consensus on the existence of certain groups as primary definitions of identity by large numbers of people, and therefore

ii) consensus on the need for the maintenance and enhancement of such separate group identities, and therefore

iii) consensus on the strategies to be employed in seeking to maintain and enhance such separate group identities.

In fine, as O'Dowd comments, "there can be no solution to this problem in a society as complex as South Africa, except on a basis of voluntarism."[61] Such consensus does not, however, exist, for while the great mass of South Africa's people do accept that they form part of certain 'groupings' of people within the country, they do not share the government's interpretation of the existence of these groupings as the fundamental reality of the South African situation. Accordingly, they also reject the need for the structural maintenance and enhancement of such separate group identities as the primary consideration of policy - and then must needs also reject strategies employed to maintain such identities qua strategies. Therefore, slogans of 'equality' will be seen as merely new strategies for the maintenance of separation and will be rejected

for that reason, because they seek to perpetuate attempts by the Afrikaner Nationalist power-base to maintain the privileged position of the 'white' group in general and the Afrikaner segment in particular.

Having defined various groups unilaterally, the government seeks now to come to consensus with each group, and is frustrated by the refusal of these groups to be defined as groups, let alone to negotiate as groups. Yet even in the most recent statements by senior members of the Cabinet the groupings themselves remain non-negotiable. Separate educational dispensations must then continue to be seen as fundamentally discriminatory because they are involuntarily established and because "Schools are created to maintain the social order."[62]

This is because guiding principles for educational policy, the organization and financing of education, machinery for consultation and decision-making all depend ultimately on access to political power. 'Separate but equal' educational provision still leaves to the 'white' parliament the decision-making authority concerning access to educational institutions and the amount of money to be spent on education, and runs the serious risk of ignoring the needs of those from disadvantaged backgrounds and environments because of the nature of the constituency to which each parliamentarian sees himself as responsible.

An investigation into educational policy must therefore be seen as but one aspect of a great debate concerning a future political ("constitutional") dispensation for South Africa. Not a murmur is heard when Africans serve on the HSRC central committee guiding the education investigation, while the exclusion of Africans from the President's Council remains a cornerstone of government policy : the contradiction indicates clearly the government's intention regarding real decision-making on educational policy.

One danger in rejecting a policy of 'separate and equal' is envisage an educational dispensation that is unitary and uniform, which is to accept a definition of educational equality requiring

the same treatment for all people. Such a definition is contradictory to a concept of equality-in-the-light-of-justice. Given effective decision making power, the majority of South Africa's people will very likely opt for an educational system not based primarily on racial classification but striving to promote the unity of South Africa's people over against their diversity. Within this framework, then, decisions may be taken on the means of safeguarding cultural diversity, but this will then be subservient to the overarching promotion of national unity and the breaking down of strategies deliberately promoting a tolerance and understanding of the language, cultures and traditions of all South Africans."[63] Ultimately this cannot be achieved by learning about people but only by learning alongside them.

A final word needs to be said concerning the relative intensity of school and society. We have pointed to the danger of expecting schools to solve the problems of society, but Corke's comment that "South African society is in a state of crisis and ... the present school systems have contributed substantially to the onset and development of that crisis"[64] points to what Dalin calls "the interplay of forces between schools and the environments, and between the educational system and society."[65] A comprehensive approach to the problems of inequality will be required if South Africa is to become a society characterised by social justice, and while formal educational facilities must be seen as a crucial part of such a comprehensive approach, it does not follow that education alone can be expected to function as a deus ex machina. Inequality is multi-causal; focusing on some bland assumption of 'equality of education' should not be allowed to divert attention from massive political, social and economic changes that are required for the future.

The ultimate issue concerns not equality but separation : "in a multiracial society, a person cannot be considered educated if he remains unexposed on a personal basis to the cultural richness and the individual diversity of his neighbours."[66]

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